

Deployment



Types of Missions

The raison d'être of the Army Medical Department is to conserve the fighting strength. The AMSC contributes substantially to fitness, wellness, injury prevention, and combat readiness. Historically, AMSC soldiers have served in a wide variety of deployment environments, ranging from humanitarian assistance to combat. Some of the possible deployment options are described below.

The Range of Military Operations

Military Operations		US Goals	Examples
COMBAT	WAR	Fight & Win	Large Scale Combat Operations
	Military Operations	Deter War & Resolve Conflict	Peace Operations Counterterrorism Show of Force / Raid Strike / NEO Nation Assistance Counterinsurgency
	Other Than War	Promote Peace & Support US Civil Authorities	Freedom of Navigation Counterdrug Humanitarian Assistance Protection of Shipping US Civil Support

Ref: Joint Pub 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War

Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Programs (HCA)

Humanitarian operations relieve or reduce the results of natural or manmade disasters or other endemic conditions such as human pain, disease, hunger, or privation in countries or regions. Humanitarian operations are usually limited in scope and duration; and are intended to supplement or complement efforts of host-nation or civil authorities or agencies with the primary responsibility for providing assistance. Such operations may be coordinated by the UN, performed jointly with other nations, or performed unilaterally by the US.

Humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) is often provided in conjunction with military operations and exercises, such as medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETE) or medical civic action programs (MEDCAPS), and must fulfill unit training requirements that incidentally create humanitarian benefit to the local populace. AMEDD soldiers may also serve as members of humanitarian mobile medical training teams. Active and reserve AMSC officers have participated in HCA in El Salvador, Honduras, Russia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Thailand, and other diverse parts of the world.

Language skills (self or interpreter) may be particularly important in HCA missions. Equipment and supplies will often be minimal. Improvisation and resourcefulness are a valuable skills in such environments. Political factors, language barriers, and cultural backgrounds must all be taken into consideration in multinational operations.

Soldiers serving as advisors to host nation counterparts may need to emphasize simplicity, basic skills, and clinical teaching. Tact, diplomacy, strong interpersonal skills, and fluency in the native language are mandatory to achieve success. Soldiers who are deployed in nation-building missions can provide valuable assistance to improve the quality of care while substantially contributing to their own personal and professional growth.

Peace Operations (PO)

POs are military operations in support of diplomatic efforts to reach long-term political settlements. Peacekeeping operations are undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute, and are designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of a cease-fire, truce, or other such agreement. An example of a peacekeeping operation in which physical therapists have been involved is the Multinational Force Observers in the Sinai since 1982.

Peace enforcement operations involve the application of military force, or threat of its use, to force compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order. The enforcement of UN sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War is an example of this type of operation.

War Operations

During time of conflict, AMSC personnel will be deployed with medical units in the theater of war. Historically, the tasks in combat environments involve neuromusculoskeletal evaluation and treatment, care of burns and open wounds, treatment of a variety of acute injuries, and stress management.

Medical Training Exercises

AMSC participation in field medical training exercises, such as at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, offers a great way to obtain hands-on experience in performing skills in a field environment. The patients may be either simulated, actual, or both. Such field training provides an excellent opportunity to directly demonstrate our skills and usefulness to other medical care providers, hospital commanders, and to the line. Such education now will ensure better utilization of these skills and services in the future.

What to Bring When Deployed

Below is a list of suggested items that you should consider taking along should you be deployed. Typically you will be allowed any combination of two duffel bags or two flight bags or one of each. You may also be allowed to bring a carry-on bag that will be small enough to stow under your flight seat. You will be required most likely to bring your full military issue, CTA50-900, web gear, and NBC equipment. Keeping this and the area in the world that you will be deployed in mind, plan accordingly. Use common sense when selecting from this list. It is not all-inclusive. If you find you cannot get all the items you have selected into your bags, ask a friend to help. Try to ship as much ahead with your unit or have a care package sent to you from a CONUS facility if possible to lighten your load. Many of the items may already be on-hand. Therefore, in selecting from this list, please keep in mind the following:

- Climate
- Type of hospital setting (field vs. fixed facility)
- Baggage and shipping limitations
- Estimated time of deployment
- How far forward you will be deployed
- Pre-existing knowledge you might have of the area

Suggested Items List:

Military Items

Canteen (2 qt) with cover
Earplugs with case
Dog tags and ID card with current rank
Medical warning tags
Geneva convention card with current rank
Emergency data card, DD Form 93
Prescription glasses: 2 pair
Prescription inserts for protective mask
Hearing aids: 2 sets
Immunization record, updated
Dental records with current panograph
Medical records with recent physical exam
Geneva convention card
Military ID card

Civilian clothing

Civilian clothes – 2-3 pairs
Running shoes and socks
Running clothes
Pajamas
Thongs/shower shoes
Jogging suit – for sleeping – making run to bathroom at night
Handkerchiefs

Military clothing:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
BDUs (type will depend on climate)	4 sets
T-shirts, subdued	5-7
Green socks	8-10 pairs
Underwear	8-10
Combat boots	2 pr
Belt, black with subdued buckle	2
Fatigue cap with subdued insignia	2
Subdued insignia	2 sets
Fatigue jacket	2
Gloves, black leather with insert	1
Scarf, woolen, olive drab	1
Blousing bands	2 sets
Additional set of shoestrings	1
Wet weather gear	
Duffel bags (name and ss# in subdued paint)	2
Waterproof bag	1
PT uniform	
Poncho	

Note: To keep out dust and excessive moisture, it is helpful to pack most items in plastic containers, or plastic bags, securing with a twist tie. It is easier to locate items and also ensures clothing will be protected from moisture. Large plastic containers fit nicely into the flight bags. The above mentioned containers can be used later to store other necessary items on site.

Make sure that that you try on all of your clothing issue. Check for fit and wear and tear. Replace those uniforms which are ill fitting and which are in poor condition. Make sure you break in both sets of boots. If you wear foot inserts or orthoses, make sure they are in your boots when you break them in. Check for missing buttons and tears in your fatigues and make sure your boot laces aren't ready to break.

The uniform may include the following TA-50 items as well: LBE with suspenders and canteen, first aid pouch, ammo case, helmet with camouflage liner, subdued rank, mess kit, NBC equipment, possibly a weapon, and Kevlar helmet.

Be sure to include MOPP gear: over-garments, gloves, boots, and protective mask.

Reminders:

- Be prepared for all types of weather.
- Label everything you own.
- No aerosols, flammables, or explosives (the plane may not be pressurized).
- There is usually a weight limit on personal gear, so plan accordingly. Do not take anything you cannot carry.

(Ref: GR 61-390-252-1)

Medications:

One month supply of prescription meds

ASA, Tylenol

Motion sickness meds

Motrin

Antihistamines

Antacids

Bacitracin

Anti-diarrhea medication

Laxatives

Anti fungal creme and powder

Cold medication/throat lozenges

Calamine lotion

Band-Aids

Lip balm

Hydrocortisone creme

Vitamins

Foot powder

Insect repellent

Moleskin

Hygiene Items:

Soap, non-perfume
Deodorant (not spray)
Personal hygiene items (3-4 month supply)
Nail clippers/file
Hand mirror (preferably steel)
Moist towelettes
Baby powder
Toothpaste
Toothbrush
Floss
Skin cream or lotion
Razors and blades
Sunscreen
Shampoo
Comb/brush
Hair dryer
Toilet paper
Bug spray (non-aerosol)
Cotton balls/swabs

Food:

Hard candy
Instant coffee, tea, or chocolate
Sugar packets
Non-perishable snacks
Variety of seasonings (optional)
Powered drinks

Laundry:

Detergent
Clothespins
Lightweight cord
Laundry bags
Sewing kit
Fabric softener
Extra wire hangers

Miscellaneous Items:

Prescription glasses and an extra pair
Sunglasses
Alarm clock (wind up)
Pens, pencils, and stationary
Notebook/journal
Address book
List of all e-mail addresses
Copy of personnel roster for your area of concentration (AOC)
Language tapes, books, and dictionaries, country maps
Portable iron (optional)
Cards/games (optional)
Camera w/ film (slides and pictures)
Matches (wooden)
Small immersion heater
Sterno stove and sterno fuel (if permitted by unit)
P 38 Field can opener
Boot inserts
Traveler's checks (\$50 denominations or less) and some cash
Credit card
Phone card
Combination &/or key lock
Kleenex
Sheets/pillow
Air mattress/Therm-a-rest
Hot plate (optional)
Towels, bath and washcloth -- 2
Small flashlight (field), with clear and red inserts and batteries
Batteries (9v,C,D,AA as needed)
Electric adapters
Swiss military knife
Chronometer w/compass (plastic band)
2 rolls of duct tape
Electrical tape
Nylon rope (50 to 100 feet)
Rope/string
Multiband radio
Rubber dish gloves
Scotch tape
Small plastic bags (variety)
Business cards
Presents (inexpensive unit coins/momentos)
Family photos
Copy of important financial information
Copy of OER support form and last OER

Ear plugs
Battery powered radio with earphones
Shoe-shine kit
Umbrella
Fanny pack

Tools:

Hammer w/ax end	Pliers (needle-nose)
Phillips screwdriver	Miscellaneous nails, screws, and tacks
Flat had screwdriver	Rechargeable drill (optional)
Small crow bar/pry bar	Tape measure and flat ruler
Ratchet set (metric)	Entrenching tool with carrier
Pliers (regular)	Vice grips
Leatherman tool	

Professional Items:

Equipment packing list
Laptop computer
Video camera/blank tapes
Camera with both slide and picture film
One month of expendable supplies (ship in MILVAN)
Small cache of needed supplies in your carry-on bag (i.e. ace bandages, porous tape, scissors)
Any overheads/diskettes of presentations
Handouts for teaching classes
Patient education handouts (30-40 copies of each)
Copy of all protocols
Copy of clinic SOPs
Reference books
Name and serial numbers for all supplies

Unit Issued Items

NBC/MOPP Gear

If you are deployed to an environment where there is an NBC threat, you will be required to have a gas mask and MOPP gear. Depending on the state of the threat you may be required to dress at certain levels of MOPP readiness. Your unit usually has regular NBC training/briefings about the care and use of your NBC gear. Take this seriously. It could mean your ultimate survival. Lack of personal maintenance of your NBC gear could endanger you and the mission of your unit. Obtain prescription inserts for your mask if needed. Contact your unit's NBC Officer/NCO for additional guidance.

Weapons

When you are deployed to hostile environments, you may be issued a weapon. You may be issued a 9-mm pistol and/or an M16. Depending on the weapon accountability concerns, your weapon may be stored in the arms room. Issuance of ammunition is variable and depends on the mission and environment. Per AR 350-41, you must be individual weapons qualified in order for you to be deployed overseas.

During weapons qualification, you will be briefed on some aspects of weapon safety. Never point a loaded or unloaded weapon at another person. When not in use, keep the safety on and always clear your weapon. You may not be called upon to use your weapon, but if you do it must be ready. Make sure you clean your weapon on a regular basis. Always know where your weapon is. Losing a weapon is looked upon almost as critically as losing a tank. It is recommended that you familiarize yourself with AR 385-63, Procedures and Policies for Firing Ammunition for Training, Target Practice, and Combat. FM 23-9 addresses the M16A1/M16A2 rifles and marksmanship.

Field Environment

Personal Hygiene and Sanitation

Personal hygiene is extremely important in the field environment. Shower facilities may be available only every 3-4 days or even less often. The showers, if available, may be very rudimentary and do not afford much privacy. The difficulties of maintaining cleanliness in a field environment have been successfully countered by the following strategies.

- Bring along or procure a wash basin. A Kevlar helmet is also a satisfactory substitute but is a great deal smaller.
- Handiwipes or moist towelettes offer the opportunity to do spot cleaning.
- Powdered or liquid soap for hand-washables is important to include for those items that need daily cleansing or that one may not wish to send to the quartermaster laundry. Be careful to bring a soap powder or liquid that is easy to rinse completely from your garments.
- Clothes hangers and clothespins are a must.
- Both males and females would be wise to wear cotton underwear in tropical climates. Cotton is cooler, more absorbent and durable, and relatively simple to maintain.
- Change or wash clothing when possible. Socks may need to be changed twice a day.
- Air clothing daily by exposing to direct sunlight
- Always wear thongs or some type of footwear when you go to and from showers to avoid insects and prickly vegetation.
- Bathe with potable water if possible. Many diseases can get onto or pass through the skin from contaminated water.
- Use foot powder twice a day.
- Have medics treat cuts, scrapes, blisters, and burns.

Proper sanitation in deployment environments can reduce the problems with diseases transmitted by insects or microorganisms (vector diseases). Below are a few suggestions to help you in the field:

- All perishable food and leftover food should be destroyed.
- Secure all water supplies and sources especially at night to prevent its contamination from potentially diseased animals.
- Keep garbage pits away from where you sleep as it attracts animals, insects and other critters.
- Don't eat where you sleep. Food remnants attract animals, insects, and other critters.
- Avoid having eating areas collocated with the mess area. You risk the chance of cross contamination as occurred in one facility in Desert Storm.
- You may want to have zip lock bags available for emergencies. The Israelis found them very handy for human waste disposal when they were confined to their tanks.

Note: The EFMB manual AR 672-10 provides excellent information on field hygiene and sanitation. Another helpful reference is FM 21-10 (Field Sanitation).

Food and Water

Bottled and/or potable water are the only acceptable forms of drinking water in the field in a great majority of overseas deployments. Dehydration can incapacitate a person within 2-3 hours in warm climates. If possible, in hot climates carry four quarts of water or more. You may not feel thirsty because thirst does not occur until you lose 1.5 quarts of water. This can occur within one hour of work. Excessive water loss can result in heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. Heat stroke can be fatal.

Food will vary from hot meals served in mess tents, fixed dining facilities, or box lunches to meals ready to eat (MREs). Be careful not to eat local meat and poultry unless it has been thoroughly cooked. Avoid fresh local vegetables as the water in which they have been washed may be contaminated. Fruits such as bananas and oranges in which the outer skin is discarded are usually safe. When there is any question about food safety, consult your disease control persons, veterinarians, or environmental/preventive medicine personnel. Another excellent reference which will be applicable in most deployments is Environmental Medicine for Desert Operations: Practical Guidance and Suggestions for Deployment and Survival- pages 3-8 (10 Aug 90).

Sleeping Quarters

Expect a variety of sleeping quarters. You may sleep in a building but on a floor or you may sleep under the stars in a sleeping bag. A couple of helpful hints might make your nights more restful:

- You are usually issued a sleeping bag. However, if you appreciate additional comfort you should bring a pillow (air or other), pillowcase, sheet and air mattress.
- If you can get a cot, it will keep you off of the ground and away from many unwanted night visitors. It is also more comfortable than hard ground. It can be taped to one of your field bags for your trip.
- Keep your sleeping area clean from food wrappers and garbage, which attract hungry animals and insects.
- If you are billeted outside, tie a plastic bag to a tree or tent post and use it for garbage.
- Boots: Shake your boots out and hang them off the ground to avoid insect and animals from crawling in them. Never leave your boots outside your tent at night. If a heavy dew falls, they will be too wet to wear.
- Sleeping bag: Upon rising open it up and air it out. You may want to hang it up to avoid insects and animals. If that is not an option be sure to shake it out well before you retire.

References: M27 NCNB-09d-01(Field Guide), GR 61-390-252-1-055, 30 APR 85 (Field Nursing, An ANC Challenge).

Safety and Security



The June 25, 1996, bombing of the Khobar Towers apartment complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia killed 19 American servicemen.

When you are in a foreign or hostile environment, there should always be a heightened security awareness. If passwords and codes must be used, ensure that you know them and stay current. **Be alert** and report any suspicious persons, vehicles, or incidents. Be aware of potential terrorist activities. Know what places are off limits and stay away from them. Avoid high-risk areas and be cautious when mingling with crowds. Be alert for surveillance. Exercise caution with strangers. Avoid casually giving personal data such as addresses and telephone numbers.

Be unpredictable. Vary your travel routes and patterns; avoid personal routines. Keep your unit or group informed of where you are going and when you will return. Travel in groups of two or three – never alone or in large groups unless on scheduled tours. Know the location of civilian police, MPs, and U.S. facilities.

Keep a low profile. Avoid distinctive American clothing like football shirts. Remove USA stickers from luggage and leave camouflage bags and notebooks at home. Avoid “American hangouts” and bars, and don’t discuss military matters in public.

On deployments you need to be aware of your environment. Wear earplugs around small arms and artillery fire, loud equipment, and aircraft noise to protect you from hearing loss. To prevent stepping on a land mine, don’t walk in areas that have not been cleared by ordnance. Be aware of possible common booby-trapped persons, areas, and objects. Watch where you walk and try not to venture out on your own into unfamiliar territory. A safety briefing is required either before or upon arrival to your deployment site. This may consist of films, tapes, pamphlets, books, and handouts. The security briefing is required and area specific.

Be aware of the threat level in whatever area you deploy. The terrorist briefing is required prior to deploying to overseas. Take it seriously. People have died from ignoring terrorist threats. The greater the threat, the more it will impact on your job. As an American, you make a great target for snipers or kidnappers. Try not to draw attention to yourself in public when in local cities, towns or villages. If rank is to be worn, it should be subdued. Shiny rank makes a good target. Do not salute in public. Be aware that a smart sniper will look for officers. Wear your helmet and flack jacket (if you have one) while you are traveling about in hostile areas. Additional helpful information may be found in AR 350-225.

References:

AR 190-52	Countering Terrorism and Other Major Disruptions on Military Installations
DA PAM	Personal Security Precautions Against Acts of Terrorism
TC 19-16	Countering Terrorism on US Army Installations
AR 600-8-101	Personnel Processing (In and Out and Mobilization Processing)
AR 380-5	SAEDA
AR 381-12	Security

Preventive Medicine

It is helpful to become familiar with the local animal, insects and plants of the deployment environment. You may obtain briefings on the indigenous plant and animal life with movies, tapes, and pamphlets. The U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine at Natick, MA may provide a great source of information on this and other subjects. Their address is: U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, MA 01760-5007, phone com. (508) 651-4811, DSN 256-4811, and Fax DSN 256-5298.

Weather

Depending on the climate in which you deploy, weather conditions may affect your performance especially if you have to wear MOPP gear. It is essential that you are physically fit. You should train in weather and conditions that will prepare you for a wide variety of climates. If you know your destination in advance, focus on preparing for the appropriate environment. You are responsible for protecting yourself from avoidable heat and cold injuries through wear of proper clothing, skin protection, and adequate hydration. For specific information on heat and cold injuries, Natick Labs provides an abundance of information. It is referenced in the above paragraph.

Laundry

Laundry services may or may not be available. It usually takes time to establish these services. In the meantime, expect to wash your own uniforms with available soap and water. Hopefully, you can dry your laundry outside. You may have to dry them in your tent to be protected from the colder elements. In overseas deployments, laundry often is provided by host country workers or by third country nationals hired by the host country. Make sure you have your clothing clearly labeled because mix-ups can easily occur. In some cases, laundry is done by hand. Bring extra fatigue buttons, as your fatigues will often be returned with broken or missing buttons from vigorous hand washings. Expect a turn around time of at least 2-4 days.

Helpful Hints When In a Hostile Environment

- Always be **flexible**.
- **Expect the unexpected**. Plan accordingly.
- Do not expect good logistical support. If it comes be happy.
- Learn to use your hands.
- Do not be afraid to scrounge or alternatively beg.
- In constructing your department expect minimal equipment.
- Check local disposal areas for useable items. Cardboard boxes, duct tape, and pallets go a long way.
- Do not be afraid to barter services for needed equipment. Get to know and be nice to your supply and logistics personnel.
- If possible check the local economy as another source of equipment needs.
- If possible, attempt to send ahead any supplies, books, special equipment, etc. that you can't carry with you (especially when deploying with a unit).
- You will always be short-handed. Try using ambulatory members in the medical hold company or cleared friendly locals.
- Because you will always be overworked, learn to prioritize your activities. Learn how to apply triage techniques to manage your patient load.
- If you leave your compound always take a buddy.
- **Always be security conscious**. Do not assume everything is as it appears.
- **Always be aware of your surroundings** whether in your compound or in the local village/city.
- When patronizing host country establishments, know where the exits are located. If seated, keep your back toward the wall. Maintain vigilance.
- If you are issued a weapon, always have it close by with the safety on. Otherwise, have it secured.

- If in an environment where there is an NBC threat, either carry your mask with you or have it within your easy reach.
- When sleeping keep your NBC gear near you at all times. **Do not use the mask and carrying case as a pillow.**
- Unless otherwise directed, do not salute in a hostile environment.
- Know where your local police, air shelter and/or bunker are located. Keep your steel pot/Kevlar (and if issued) your flack jacket handy.
- If in a field environment use sandbags to build an area of cover somewhere in or near your clinic. Should a rocket/mortar/artillery attack occur, protect your head and extremities. Get under a table or a bed or whatever else will provide cover. In a sandbag bunker look for a corner or wall.
- Be aware and sensitive of the local customs and beliefs and behave accordingly.
- Be aware and sensitive of the political environment when dealing with the host country and our allies.
- Working in a hostile environment can be very stressful. Make sure you have someone you can talk to.
- Your department is your team. Keep the lines of communication open. **Protect and support your NCOs and enlisted.** They will respond in kind.
- During your “off-duty” time, when not sleeping, try to keep active. Get involved with MWR activities and write home often.
- When all else fails, **use common sense.** Be a professional both as a soldier and as a clinician.

Two men looked out from the same bars;
one saw mud and one the stars.

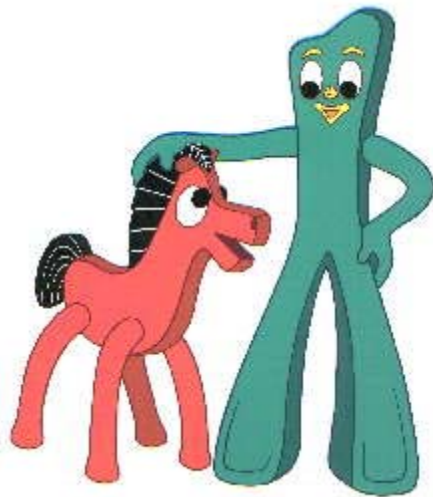
--Frederick Langbridge

Adaptability and Flexibility

The precise conditions under which the deployed individual or unit may be called into service cannot be predicted. One must constantly expect the unexpected from personnel, equipment, and the environment. Flexibility and adaptability are essential. Success will be influenced by the PT's or OT's ability to tolerate and handle the unexpected.

Maintaining a positive attitude in an environment of scarcity and potential stress is a strength that a true leader must possess. A “half full” outlook is a virtue that strengthens and motivates everyone around you. A good sense of humor, laughter, and a positive outlook are “force multipliers.” Those who spread joy invariably reap a good measure for themselves. Look for the humorous aspects of your experience. You will find plenty.

REMEMBER, SEMPER GUMBY!



Stress Management

The level of readiness of an individual or unit can often be measured by use of a checklist of goals, tasks, and objectives. Unfortunately, one cannot prepare oneself psychologically for wartime stresses from a checklist. This type of readiness is often ignored or only discussed briefly. Moving from a hospital setting to a field or foreign hospital environment requires a major physical, emotional, and professional transition. Tremendous personal adjustments must be made. In general, lesser degrees of emotional and physical adjustment reactions occur if prior training has included exposure to the roughness of the field environment and instruction or experience in what to expect.

In any type of combat situation, stress is an inherent factor that underlies the entire experience. It may be stress and anxiety from having too much to do, too little to do, and/or apprehension and fear of the unknown. Under these circumstances, our personal relationships become intensified and our positive and negative experiences magnified. Survival in rigorous, unpleasant conditions will largely depend upon developing strong interpersonal relationships with coworkers. Our ability or inability to interact with others will be accentuated since it is unlikely that we will go home to our own private home or apartment during off-duty hours. We will not only work together, we will eat, sleep, and play together. These relationships have the potential for creating strong support units or units plagued with disharmony and dissension, as the case may be.

During high-pressure situations, people will discover hidden resources of strength and self-confidence. Many will experience satisfaction from performing difficult tasks under arduous conditions. Some discover their coping mechanisms are strong at some points in time and less than adequate at other times. This situation points to the need for us to establish a strong network for support. We may be the ones who need support, while at other times, we may be the ones to give support. At times, our own strength needs replenishing to prevent the emotional vacuum from developing within ourselves. Whether colleagues, friends, subordinates, or superior, it doesn't really matter. When you're adapting to or coping with a combat, disaster, or peacetime training situation, the most important resource of all is people—working and living together as harmoniously as possible.

Physical exercise is an excellent way to let off steam. Recreation time is healthy and needs to be pursued creatively. Individual groups will develop shared common interest. Such groups promote special feelings of comradeship that develop and endure long after the experience has ended. Adequate sleep, food intake, and cleanliness should be pursued to reduce stress.

It is important for each of us to have a clear understanding of why we are in the situation of deployment. These include our beliefs, value systems, and personal feelings about the reasons the US Army is training you or utilizing your skills and knowledge in a disaster or combat situation.

Experts in the field of stress management advocate the PIE approach: Proximity, Immediacy, Expectancy. Proximity refers to treating the individual as near to the unit locale as is possible and safe. Immediacy indicates the need for early recognition with appropriate intervention. Expectancy refers to reinforcing the concept of wellness and a return to normalcy, not treating the individual as a sick person.

This is applicable to you, the individual, as well as to your colleagues and patients. All of us have a point at which we have the potential of reaching our “breaking point.” It may manifest itself as “burnout.” The inability to continue functioning in a normal, effective way occurs when these physical and emotional needs are unmet or unfulfilled for a period of time.

The stress reaction from caring for seriously injured casualties to being in actual combat is an extension of the burnout syndrome with fear for loss of one’s own life and grief for the loss of others. The key to effective treatment lies in early recognition of signals of an impending stress reaction in yourself and others with early appropriate intervention. An understanding, supportive approach aims at reducing the stigma attached to these reactions associated with a temporary breakdown. Recognizing that these reactions are a normal component of prolonged exposure to stress and fear reduces the stigma and promotes an attitude of concern combined with reassurance. Intervention, combined with support from friends and peers, usually returns the individual to full duty very quickly. Chances for recovery are the greatest when stress casualties are treated by professionals who recognize the soldier is temporarily disabled, but expected to quickly resume full duty.

Modified from Field Nursing, An ANC Challenge

Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.

--Dr. Hans Selye

Deployment Stress

Introduction

It is reasonable to expect that a soldier will be separated from family members during the course of his or her career, either due to deployment or remote assignments. Separations can be traumatic.

All humans experience some form of separation in their lives. Without the experience of separation, we would not be the autonomous, capable individuals that we are today. Hopefully, from those previous experiences with separation, we have learned some techniques or skills to cope successfully.

“The myths of deployment listed below are described in the booklet, “Making a Home in the Navy.”

Myth #1: Many people assume that one “gets used to” separations, and that they therefore don’t hurt as much.

Research proves this is false, as does personal experience. The first deployment requires the greatest adaptation because everything is new. The next several deployments are somewhat easier because of lessons learned. However, if the deployment cycle is frequent and continuous, families find that the effect is cumulative, and the strain is great.

Knowing that there are certain feelings and experiences that are common to those who are separated may help you feel less alone.

Myth #2: After a deployment, you pick up where you left off before the deployment.

This is not true, particularly after the first separation. Each partner has been changed by his or her experiences and the physical, mental, and emotional challenges. There is a saying “you cannot cross the same river twice, because the second time, both you and the river have changed.” Service members, spouses, family members, and friends must learn to be flexible as they adapt to each other’s growth. The reacquaintance process may be a combination of both pain and pleasure.

Myth #3: All of the illnesses experienced during deployment are a figment of your imagination or due to the stress of separation.

Prior to a deployment, and in preparation to return, military personnel work hard physically. Family members may go through the same process. If emotional exhaustion factors in, stress readily results. Studies of people under stress show them to be more vulnerable to illness and more accident-prone.

A Few Suggestions to Deal with Stress

- **WORK OFF STRESS** – If you are angry or upset, try to blow off steam through physical activities. Physical effort gives you ammunition to fight against the mental stress.
- **TALK OUT YOUR WORRIES** – Another person can help you see a new side of your problems and, perhaps, a new solution. Seeking a professional listener is not admitting defeat. It is admitting you are an intelligent being who knows when to ask for assistance.
- **LEARN TO ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE** – If the problem is beyond your control at this time, try your best to accept it until change is possible.
- **AVOID SELF-MEDICATION** – Chemicals, including alcohol, increase stress rather than reduce it. If the ability to handle stress interferes with sleep, seek medical assistance.
- **GET ENOUGH SLEEP AND REST** – Sleep deprivation can lessen your ability to handle stress by making you more irritable. If stress repeatedly prevents you from sleeping, you should inform your doctor.
- **BALANCE WORK AND RECREATION** – “All work and no play” is a bad lifestyle choice. Schedule time for recreation to relax your mind.
- **DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS**—When you are distressed, you tend to concentrate on yourself. Doing something for someone else will take your mind off your problems.
- **TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME** – It is defeating to tackle all your tasks at once. Instead, set some aside and work on the most urgent.
- **GIVE IN ONCE IN A WHILE** – If the source of your stress is other people, try giving in instead of insisting you are always right. You may find others will begin to give in, too.
- **MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE** – When you are bored and feel left out, go where the action is! Get involved and be willing to be an active participant in life.

How to Survive Separations: Suggestions for Family Members

Experience has shown that a deployment is much easier on families if they prepare for it and know the tricks of getting along during a separation. These suggestions ease the potential strain associated with a deployment. Refer as needed to the section on Family Readiness and the Military Spouse Checklist.

- Service all major appliances, air conditioning and heating systems, and automobiles before the separation occurs. Make a list of phone numbers of repair persons who will service the appliances or cars if anything should break down.
- Be aware of the rights and benefits to which families are entitled.
- Attend pre-deployment briefings. They offer valuable information and provide an opportunity to meet people facing the same problems.
- Neighbors can be very helpful. Good neighbors will check occasionally to see that all is well and they'll usually make themselves available to help out if they can.
- Have allotment checks sent directly to the bank. The family at home will find it easier to pay monthly bills on time, buy food and clothing, and meet emergencies.
- A cassette tape recorder at home and in the site of deployment can be a morale booster. Tape recorded messages break the monotony of letter writing and can be fun.
- Remember, the mail is not always regular. Letters can cross in the mail and may seem to take forever to get answered. Blame it on the mail service, not on each other.
- Special services may be offered to a family during a deployment, such as sponsored trips and excursions, tickets to sporting or entertainment events. Take advantage of these opportunities. Hobby shops on post such as auto, ceramics, woodworking, framing, silk-screening, etc., can be an enjoyable and productive diversion.
- Set goals for yourselves. Pursue self-development programs. Study interesting topics, or learn a new skill or hobby.
- Get involved in some ongoing activities such as a job or volunteer work.
- Know at least three of your neighbors. You may need their help in an emergency and they can offer day-to-day support.

- Take up a new hobby or return to one you gave up for lack of time.
- Don't feel guilty about going out with friends and leaving your children with a babysitter. It might be a cheap price to maintain your sanity.
- Don't "run home to parents" if the going gets rough.
- If you and your spouse have some differences, try to resolve them before the departure. The flames of discontent can grow to raging fires if not extinguished early.
- Find a friend that you can enjoy being yourself with.
- Formal or informal support groups can help ease the stress of separation.
- Little things help, such as cooking a special dish you enjoy, starting a project, playing a musical instrument, or performing some physical exercise. It will help to relieve emotional strain.
- If you have children, take them on an outing to a museum, library, movie, recreational activity, or shopping trip.
- Break up the week with special activities, such as a Thursday night movie or a Tuesday morning shopping trip.
- Don't sit home on weekends thinking "if only he or she were here." Go on an outing. Do something.
- Don't be afraid to invite guests over to your home.
- When your spouse returns, give him or her time to adjust. Don't confront them with problems as soon as they arrive. Allow your spouse some time to be alone.

Children and Deployment

Parents can help children understand and accept the deployment and their feelings about it by planning ahead. Anticipate what some of the problems might be and discuss them with the entire family while both parents are still at home.

Often when asked if something is bothering them, a child will say “no.” But there are ways to get through. Make some casual reference to the deployment. Sometimes that enables parents and children to share similar feelings. It also helps a child to realize that the parent is a real person who can cry as well as laugh, and it models in an appropriate way how to release feelings – by talking about them.

Visit your child’s teachers. Children frequently react to the deployment by misbehaving in class or performing poorly in their schoolwork. A teacher who is aware of the situation is in a better position to be sensitive and encouraging. The deploying parent should leave at least three stamped, self-addressed envelopes with the teacher with a request for periodic communication regarding the child’s progress as well as a special product of the school or classroom, such as a classroom newspaper and school PTA newsletter.

It is helpful for children to see the mom or dad’s workplace. Very young children need to see where dad/mom eat, sleep, and spend some of their day away from home. This provides them with a concrete image of where their dad or mom is when they can’t be home.

Plan for communicating. Expect children to stay in touch with their mom/dad. A lively discussion needs to take place before deployment. Encourage children to brainstorm the many ways that communication can occur in addition to letter writing, such as cassette tape exchanges, photographs with their father/mother while he/she is away, encoded messages, “puzzle messages” (a written letter cut into puzzle parts that must be assembled in order to read), unusual papers for stationery and pictures drawn by preschoolers.

The pre-deployment period is stressful for parents and children. Confronted with an extended absence of a parent, family members sense a loss of continuity and security. Children may not fully understand why their dad or mom must leave. Very young children may become confused and fearful that their mom or dad will also desert them.

Children are not very good at expressing fears and feelings in words. Anger and a desire for revenge, and guilt for feeling that way, is often demonstrated in the child’s behavior. Children want everything to remain the same. When change occurs, and there is nowhere to go, the change is puzzling and disturbing to children.

What can be done about relieving the stress of the pre-deployment period?

Talk to your children about the deployment before it happens. Communicate your thoughts and feelings about the separation. Be open and honest. Some parents worry that advance warning will only give a child more time to fret. However, children can sense when something is about to happen and worry more when they are left in the dark. Knowing about the deployment in advance helps adjusting to the idea.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE MATERIAL

Military Family Separation Video Series: Available at the Family Support Centers upon request.

Amen DG, Jellen L, Merves EM, Lee RE. Minimizing the impact of deployment separation on military children: Stages, current preventive efforts and system recommendations. *Milt Med*, 153(9), 441-6, Sep 88.

Black WG. Military-induced family separation: A stress reduction intervention. *Social Work*, May 1993.

Hints for Making Deployment Easier for Soldiers with Young Children

- Kids can record cassettes to dad/mom,, especially tots learning to talk. The spouse away can record a cassette for the children; read a favorite story and “visit” with each child.
- A snapshot picture book can be made of dad/mom doing everyday things with the kids (one for each child); giving baths, reading, taking walks, playing ball, etc. and the spouse in uniform where he/she works.
- The deployed spouse should send postcards or letters to each child with brief, easy sentences about the child’s or his/her own daily events. Children love receiving their own mail and enjoy pictures also.
- Buy or plan presents for birthday and holidays in advance and attach a special message. Kids love getting gifts through the mail from other countries – T-shirts from different countries or items they can share at school.
- On a world map, place map pins to show the location of mom/dad. Children can see for themselves where mom/dad are. Help them to learn about the geography, people, and customs of the foreign environment.
- Give children a method of measuring the passage of time. Families use such techniques as a ceremonial crossing off each day on the calendar as it passes, or tearing off a paper chain consisting of the number of days of the weeks the spouse will be away.

Family Care During Deployment

Family Medical Care

DEERS

The Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is a system used in conjunction with the identification card for determining eligibility for medical and dental care in U.S. military medical treatment facilities.

Everyone in the Uniformed Services-Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is affected by DEERS. DEERS is used to verify and confirm eligibility for those on active duty, retired, family members, surviving family members, Guard/Reserve personnel who are activated for a period in excess of 30 days, and other special categories of people who qualify for benefits.

A member of the National Guard or Reserve on active duty under orders that specify a period of more than 30 days must complete a DD Form 1172, Application For Uniformed Services Identification Card DEERS Enrollment on eligible family members and submit this to the Service personnel office for processing.

A member of the National Guard or Reserve not on orders that specify a period of active duty for more than 30 days must pre-enroll all eligible family members in DEERS so that in the event of a general mobilization, family members eligibility can be confirmed immediately. In the 90-day period preceding a sponsor's 60 birthday, which marks his or her entitlement to retirement pay and other DOD benefits, the sponsor is automatically enrolled by his/her Service. The sponsor must then enroll all eligible family members.

Active duty members of the Army and their eligible family members should contact their local Uniformed Service personnel office. Anyone with further questions concerning his or her DEERS enrollment can call the DEERS Beneficiary Telephone Center at 1-800-538-9552; in California call 1-800-334-4162; in Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico call 1-800-527-5602 or 1-800-538-9552.

Once enrolled in DEERS, the sponsor is carried in the DEERS computer data bank along with their family members and eligibility for service can be checked when necessary. Whenever the status of a family member changes, the sponsor is responsible for ensuring that such changes are reported. This can be accomplished by contacting the Personnel section of their unit.

Patients presenting themselves for treatment are required to be processed for DEERS eligibility. This is accomplished at three locations on post: Admissions, Pharmacy, and Outpatient Administration.

CHAMPUS

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) is intended to supplement medical benefits received from a military hospital or medical clinic. When care is not available through the local military treatment facility, civilian providers are used for medical treatment. Also, CHAMPUS recognizes different categories of eligible persons, for whom available benefits and costs vary. Some people are not eligible for CHAMPUS, such as active duty service members, parents, parents-in-law, and most persons eligible for Medicare. All CHAMPUS eligible persons must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS), which is a computerized eligibility checking system, before CHAMPUS claims can be paid.

A full range of information on Health Benefits Programs, including CHAMPUS and CHAMPUS Partnership Program is available at the CHAMPUS office in the nearest military medical facility. A toll-free CHAMPUS claims number is (800) 866-6337.

TRICARE

In addition to the traditional CHAMPUS Standard benefit (now called TRICARE Standard), CHAMPUS beneficiaries now have two additional health care options, TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Extra. TRICARE Prime features expanded benefits, no deductible, less paperwork, and reduced out-of-pocket costs. Under TRICARE Prime, a Primary Care Manager (PCM) must coordinate all non-emergency care and provide a referral for specialty care. In addition, all specialty care and non-emergency out-of-area care must be pre-approved by the Health Care Finder. Enrolling in the TRICARE Prime program is voluntary. For program information, call (800) 406-2832. Or email at <http://www.ha.osd.mil/> email

Family Assistance Services

Army Emergency Relief

AER is a private, nonprofit organization that “helps the Army take care of its own.” AER provides financial assistance to Army members and their families in times of emergency. For a reservist to be eligible, they must be on active duty for more than 30 days or ordered to active duty. When seeking assistance from AER, soldiers should bring their ID card, leave and earning statement (LES), and any other useful information (i.e. medical bills, eviction notices etc.). The AER headquarters telephone number is: (202) 325-0184.

Categories of authorized emergency financial assistance:

- Non-receipt of pay
- Loss of funds
- Medical, dental, or hospital expense
- Funeral expense
- Emergency travel
- Rent
- Food
- Utilities
- Essential transportation (POV)
- Clothing
- Fire or other disaster
- Lack of necessities

Who does AER help?

- Active duty soldiers, single or married, and their dependents
- ARNG and USAR soldiers on active duty for more than 30 days and their dependents
- Soldiers retired from active duty for longevity or physical disability, and their dependents
- ARNG and USAR soldiers who retired at age 60, and their dependents
- Surviving spouses and orphans of soldiers who died while on active duty or after they retired

What can AER do?

Help with emergency financial needs for:

- Food, rent or utilities
- Emergency transportation and vehicle repair
- Funeral expenses
- Medical/dental expenses
- Personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen
- Give undergraduate-level education scholarships, based primarily on financial need, to children of soldiers

What can't AER do?

- Help pay for nonessentials
- Finance ordinary leave or vacation Pay fines or legal expenses
- Help liquidate or consolidate debt
- Assist with house purchase or home improvements
- Help purchase, rent or lease a vehicle
- Cover bad checks or pay credit card bills

For more information, contact:

AER National Headquarters
Department of the Army
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600

The American Red Cross

The Red Cross provides a wide range of services to military personnel and their families 24 hours a day. The ARC cooperates closely with the Department of the Army by carrying out activities supplementing and otherwise assisting the Army in its programs relating to the health, welfare, recreation, and morale of military personnel and their families. Some of the services provided by the ARC are:

Communication: With their world-wide communications network, the Red Cross can rapidly transmit verified information to help clarify misunderstandings, reestablish broken communications, or support requests for Emergency Leave.

Assistance with Emergency or Convalescent Leave: The Red Cross does not have the authority to grant or deny emergency leave, but can provide the complete verified information to the Commanding Officer to enable him or her to make the correct decision concerning emergency leave. Therefore, soldiers should contact the Red Cross first if there is an emergency that may require the presence of the service member. Emergency leave usually has to involve the service member's family—the spouse, the children, the spouse's parents, brothers and sisters. Uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents are seldom considered as close enough relations to require emergency leave. Emergency leave is not a grant. It counts as ordinary leave.

Financial Assistance: The Red Cross will help with funds for food, clothing, shelter, and transportation to see soldiers and their families through an unanticipated financial emergency. These funds can be provided as either an unsecured, non-interest bearing loan or an outfight grant.

Other Programs: The Red Cross can assist with family counseling; patient recreation programs; courses of instruction in first aid, water safety, and home nursing; youth services programs; disaster preparedness; and various activities by Red Cross volunteers.

United Service Organization (USO)

The USO is much more than a troop of entertainers. It is the only civilian organization dedicated exclusively to helping service members and their families. The USO is nonprofit and relies solely on private and corporate donations. The USO is a comfortable place for soldiers in an unfamiliar location. USOs are located in some commercial air, rail, and bus terminals, and sometimes in large city centers. The USO is staffed largely by service-oriented volunteers.

Army Community Service Center

The Army Community Service Center is one of the mainstays for family assistance during deployment or mobilization. Every Army post has one and each is staffed with highly trained human service professionals and volunteers. Family assistance centers are established during large deployments and mobilizations, and can serve as the first point of contact for a soldier who needs help in any matter. They provide financial management assistance, information on the exceptional family member program, child support services, family advocacy, relocation services, and information regarding other services available both on and off post.

The six essential services of ACS are:

- Information, referral, and follow-up service program.
- Financial planning and assistance service program.
- Relocation service program.
- Handicapped dependent's assistance services.
- Army child advocacy program.
- Child support service program.

Army Education Center

The Army Education Center can be a helpful resource for continuing education and professional development. Information is available on various officer programs (PA, OCS, ROTC, etc).

Services include:

- Basic Skill Education Program (BSEP)
- High School Completion Program
- Servicemen's Opportunity College Associate Degree Program (SOC)
- Veteran's Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
- Skill Recognition Program
- Language Program (Headstart-Gateway)
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support Service (DANTES)
- Education Counseling Service
- MOS Reference Library
- Testing Service

Chaplain Support

The chaplains minister to the religious needs of the soldiers and their families. They are clergy in uniform, and provide service to persons of all religions. Chaplains lead in worship and prayer, provide religious instruction, sacraments, church ordinances, and life cycle ministry. They provide pastoral care and assistance in crisis and emergencies.

Worship, prayer, religious education, and spiritual growth are important in the lives of soldiers and their families. Family unity, strong community ties, and support in times of separation or crisis are all benefits of these programs. Get acquainted with the chaplain(s), and do not hesitate to share in these programs.

The Army Family Life Communication Line

This is a toll free line for family members of active component (AC), reserve component (RC), and Department of the Army (DA) civilians. A well-trained staff is available to provide information and refer family members to appropriate programs or agencies to meet their needs. They are open from 0830 to 1630 eastern time. Their toll free number in CONUS (except Virginia) is (800) 336-5467. In Virginia it is (800) 572-5439. The number in Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico is (800) 336-5480.

MWR Support

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) activities are normally present on post during times of non-deployment. MWR provides amenities such as video rentals, TV rooms, athletic rentals, and many other items and activities to boost the morale and support for soldiers and their families. Most of the activities are free of charge. MWR often provide a snack bar with chips, candy bars, and sodas at nominal prices. They also provide athletic gear and plan and run a variety of activities to meet the many needs of the soldiers. In hostile environments, there is often a lot of “down” time interspersed with times of chaos and stress. MWR can provide much needed support in the field and for families back home.

Legal Assistance

Legal officers at the Judge Advocate General’s office provide the following services:

- Advice and assistance with legal problems
- Preparation of wills
- Preparation of powers of attorney
- Notary public service
- Legal assistance relative to insurance claims and financial problems

It is best to call ahead and make an appointment. Remember that Army lawyers are not allowed to appear as counsel in civil courts.

Other Sources

There are other agencies that provide a wide range of services that warrant mention. For additional information refer to DA Pam 360-525 and the local family assistance center. Other services available through military, governmental, or civilian agencies include:

- Legal aid centers
- Alcohol and drug abuse prevention program.
- Veteran's Administration
- Public Health Department
- United Way agencies
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Parents Anonymous
- Local churches
- Hot lines
- Public library
- Civic and fraternal organizations (Lions, Elks, Rotary, Kiwanis, Jaycees)
- The Salvation Army

Communications

Keeping in Touch

Good communication is an important part of keeping any friendship or relationship alive. During a prolonged separation, communication becomes a vital necessity.

Now is the time to open up communication lines. Honestly discuss with your spouse, family members, and/or friends your feelings about the deployment. What are your fears and expectations? Have you considered and discussed what kinds of changes can be expected by the time the deployment is over? Spouses often become more independent by deployment's end. The spouse at home may begin or end a job. Personalities may change, especially with children. By the time the service member returns, goals may have changed.

Letters

Letters are your lifeline to sanity. (Wait until you have not received one in a week and see if you don't think so). Expect a delay in receiving letters at the beginning of a deployment. Writing letters is an excellent means of reducing stress and letting others know that they are important to you. The following provides guidelines for writing letters during separations:

- Answer all questions.
- Ask advice when needed.
- Explain problems clearly. If any confusion exists, worry results.
- Express appreciation for letters, cards, and tapes. Mention one or two points of special interest.
- Relate daily activities in an amusing or interesting way.
- Share your feelings as openly and freely as you can without indulging in self-pity.
- Express yourself clearly so the reader will not misinterpret the intended meaning.
- Children should be encouraged to write notes, draw pictures, and express their feelings as well.
- Share news of the neighborhood, friends, and relatives. If deployed, share news of daily activities.

- Write regularly and often. If writing letters is too tedious, send cards.
- Send an occasional gift or care package.
- Consider occasional phone calls. However, be alert to the costs of such calls. Discuss and decide before deployment the frequency and duration of the calls. Set a time limit.
- Record the date in your letters. This helps to eliminate confusion if the mail is delayed and will help keep track of which letter was written first.
- When security is an issue, do not share information about your exact location, mission, code names, etc.
- WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!

Messages

Some occasions might require a faster method of contacting the service member than a letter, such as a serious illness or injury, or a death in the family. Depending on the severity of the situation, there are two primary ways to send a message to the deployed unit. The American Red Cross will send verified emergency information only. There is no charge for Red Cross messages. Before you call, have the following information on hand:

Rank and Full Name
Social Security Number
Complete Duty Address

Personal and non-emergency messages can be sent through Western Union, (800) 325-6000. These include births, seasonal salutations, birthday and anniversary greetings, expected hospitalization, or just personal messages.

There are different types of Western Union messages, each with its own rate. Except for the Mailgram, the address does not count as any of the words for which you must pay. Keep in mind that all rates are subject to change, and you should ask before you definitely decide to send a message.

A night letter is less expensive and a couple hours is usually the only difference between the telegram and the night letter. Most telegrams and night letters are delivered within 36 hours, depending upon the priority status (a death would have priority over a valentine) and the number of other messages which must be sent by the communications center. However, Western Union emphasizes that there are no guarantees for delivery times. Once the message is delivered to the communications center, it is out of Western Union's hands.

The contents of the Western Union message are not confidential. Don't say anything that might be embarrassing. Western Union should not be used to send the service member bad news that will potentially cause pain and/or distress, such as serious illness, hospitalization complications, or a death or injury in the family. These messages are best sent through the Red Cross. This message is free and can be delivered by the Chaplain who can provide appropriate support.

Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS)

MARS operators are HAM radio owners who have been certified by the FCC and, after meeting certain qualifications, accepted by the director of the MARS program. They are volunteers who bring hundreds of families together every day. Their primary purpose is to provide a point of personal contact for the service member and his family, but they have filled a wide range of needs. Each operator has a strict code of confidentiality.

If you receive a MARS call, the MARS operator will first verify that you are the person they want, then give you their name and location, and tell you they are a MARS operator and for whom they are calling. You'll be asked if you have ever talked on a phone patch before. If you say you have, you will get the quick refresher course. If you have not, they will tell you the do's and don'ts.

There is a 3 to 5 minute limit on these calls. Topics related to mission security, such as the exact location of the unit, or previous or future activities, may not be discussed because the line is not secure. It is helpful to have a prepared list of topics so that the limited time is used effectively.

Overseas Phone Calls

Hearing a familiar voice can be wonderful, **but the cost may be expensive.** Agree before the deployment how often, and when, phone calls will be made. As with MARS calls, it is helpful to be prepared for the call by keeping a list of discussion topics near the phone.

Care Packages

A care package is a terrific morale booster. They can be fun to put together, and are a good outlet for creativity. Here are some suggestions for contents:

cookies	fudge	brownies
magazines	newspaper clippings	joke books
pictures	cartoon books	self-addressed envelopes
puzzle books	personal cards	puzzles
nuts	medicines (Tylenol, aspirin)	international coffees
trail mix	health food snacks	snacks
jerky	music tapes	deodorant
shampoo	shoe insoles	candy bars
stamps	specialty teas	taped TV shows
VCR home movies	games	dry soup mixes
sewing kit	chewing gum	cheeses
plastic containers	batteries	hand lotion
pocket books	board games	

Always place an extra address card inside of the package before you seal it. If the box should be damaged, and the address on the outside cannot be read, the backup address increases chances that the package will arrive at its intended destination instead of the dead-letter bin.

Further suggestions for care packages:

- Don't send anything that is highly perishable; there's no refrigeration available.
- Although a 2-3 week space between mailing and receiving a package is about normal, it could take as long as 6 to 8 weeks.
- If you are sending a package for a special occasion, be sure to mail it so it has plenty of time to arrive.
- Don't send aerosols or liquids in glass containers.
- Never send fireworks or other explosives.
- Include photographs.
- Mark any packages that contain recorded messages, music, or VCR tapes with the words "Magnetic, Recorded Tape Enclosed."

Mailing Tips

- UPS will not accept packages with an APO address.
- The package cannot weigh more than 70 pounds, and must not exceed 108 inches in combined girth and length.
- Don't use wrapping paper if you can help it. String should not be used because it will foul up the postal machines. The post office recommends use of reinforced, nylon strapping tape.
- Pack everything snugly, so it doesn't move around, and try to distribute the weight evenly so one side is not heavier than the other.
- Baked goods must be packaged in sealed containers and well-cushioned.

Host Country Considerations

Learn as much as possible about the country you are deploying to in advance. Consider its history, geography, customs, culture, religions, economy, political system, and languages. It is important to always use good judgment, tact, and diplomacy in any dealings you have with the people.

Customs and Courtesies

You must be aware of the host country customs and courtesies. We are the visitors and we must behave accordingly. Customs, foods and types of greetings in our country vary greatly from other countries. Many things we do normally in the US are considered rude or taboo by other countries. There are restrictions on foods, clothing, and touching. To familiarize yourself with the culture and customs of the host country, request pamphlets or consult with your library. Be sure to attend any briefings on these topics.

Laws

We live in a democratic society which has laws that govern about everything we do. We are protected by the law and afforded due process. In most foreign deployments you will go to countries that do not share the same view. Their laws are different and their justice may swift and severe. Familiarize yourself with available information in this area. Obey their laws. If you get in trouble, the American government may not be able to rescue you.

Religious Customs

Religious customs are very different from country to country and within the same country. People take their religions very seriously. If you know where you might be deployed, it is wise to familiarize yourself with the religious beliefs of that country to avoid insulting your hosts. The chaplain's office can offer some helpful information on various religious customs. The local post library will also provide useful information in this area.

Food

Each culture has food indigenous to its geographic area and culture. If you sample the local food, be sure that it is clean and properly prepared. Stay away from raw fish, meat, and poultry.

Political Considerations

We will be guests in the area we are deployed. It is essential that we behave and do not cause an international incident. You must treat the host country's military personnel with all of the respect due their rank. Try to avoid religious, ideological, or political debates with your hosts. Keep a low profile and as the saying goes, "when in Rome do as the Romans do!"

Local military/Police Force

You will be briefed on the host country and allied forces military. Get to know the rank structure and identity so that you may extend to them the courtesy due their rank. Allied military personnel will often be working side by side with us and can help as interpreters. Be judicious in your interactions with native uniformed personnel.

Host Country Medical Providers

If you work closely with host country medical personnel, realize that their training is different than yours. Often, because of cultural and religious differences, they may treat patients differently. Some may avoid physical contact with patients of the opposite gender. Because many countries do not recognize gender equality as in the U.S., female clinicians will be posed with additional challenges, and male clinicians may not be allowed to treat women. Be ready to adapt to the restrictions placed upon you.

Reintegration

This discussion on reintegration is based on the conviction that it is more comforting and positive to meet problems in an open manner rather than to deny their existence. Reintegration back into society from a combat situation is a topic that should be addressed. In WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Gulf War, the military returned home to a hero's welcome. This was not the case for Vietnam War veterans or veterans of other low intensity conflicts.

Most returning soldiers from WWI or WWII returned on troop or hospital ships. The passage was long and slow so the time between leaving the war zone and re-entry into their old way of life was a week or longer. This time allowed for some closure to take place whether individually or with their unit. Reunions were planned, friendships cemented and war stories told and retold. Vietnam vets had an entirely different type of departure and arrival. They reached the end of their tour, said goodbye to their unit, caught a ride to the airport, and entered the plane for the return home. They may not have known anyone else on that airplane. They left a hostile environment and returned to a hostile environment.

In the Vietnam War, people had a 12-month set tour. Soldiers arrived in country by themselves and were placed in a unit that had been in country for a while. With the exception of some elite units, people were constantly rotating in and out. Unit cohesion was very poor. Individual rotation in and out of the combat environment plays havoc with bonding. Morale and discipline problems were great. Proper closure never really took place. People were relieved to be coming home and wished to forget the experience.

As with the Vietnam War, jet transportation will make the transition from the deployed environment to the home environment very abrupt. Chances are high that persons returning will have had experiences not likely to be repeated in a peacetime environment. These experiences may range from the exciting to the horrible and ugly aspects of war. As health professionals, we deal mainly with war's victims. War experiences bring about permanent changes in people's lives. The physical, mental, and emotional changes can be both positive and negative.

It is important to be able to talk about your experiences – both good and bad. Accept that an experience such as this changes you permanently. Upon returning home you are not really going to be the same person. Some of these changes will be primarily temporary, such as an exaggerated startle reflex to loud sounds. These responses are normal and acceptable. Tell yourself these will gradually fade. Talk about your experiences with others who either have been there or can act as good listeners. Catharsis is good therapy. Reunions with others who have been deployed with you link the past to the present and permit memories and feelings to be dealt with in a “safe” atmosphere.

Reunions encourage positive exchange of feelings, positive feedback, and esprit de corps, and often bring about a sense of closure.

Do not worry about coming back and being normal.. Accept that you have changed and so has the place you are returning to.

Modified from Field Nursing, An ANC Challenge

Summary

Every deployment or mobilization brings its own unique challenges and circumstances. It is a journey into the unknown, without exact eight digit coordinates. The azimuth you shoot will depend on your insight from previous training and experience, your needs assessment, environmental requirements, and your motivation, attitude, and PREPARATION. Well-prepared soldiers are confident in themselves and their ability to accomplish the mission.

By being well-prepared, the experience of serving your country in a special operation or mission can lead to immense professional and personal satisfaction, knowing that you played an important part in achieving the success of our military mission and a return to peace.

If you aren't ready for deployment, act now. Considering the precarious and delicate state of world affairs, that ominous phone call could come tonight.